



January 2002

Downtown Austin Access and Mobility Plan

Summary

The City of Austin's Downtown area is experiencing an increase in development and associated traffic problems. This emerging development includes residential housing, a new City Hall, the Convention Center expansion, office buildings, cultural centers and retail development. Downtown transportation access and mobility is a major influence on Austin's economy, quality of life, and urban form. Providing good access and mobility are significant issues that are vigorously debated by local business, shoppers, workers, policy makers and City staff. To address these issues, the City has authorized a transportation access and mobility plan study to analyze how we get to, around, and out of downtown and how we could do so effectively in the future.

Status

The Downtown Austin Access and Mobility Plan is a 12-month project. Work began in March 2000 and will be completed in February 2001. Public meetings will be held in April, July, October and December. The purpose of these four meetings is to introduce the public to the project and to obtain public input throughout study.

Description

The overall project study area is generally bounded by IH-35 on the east, Barton Springs Road/Riverside Drive on the south, Lamar Boulevard on the west, and 15th Street on the north. Loop I affects access to Downtown Austin from the west. To account for this impact data will be collected at specific locations along Barton Springs Road, W. Cesar Chavez Street, W. 5h Street, W. 60' Street and Enfield Road. The attached figure illustrates the study area.

The emphasis of the plan is on analyzing traffic operations to determine existing and future levels- of-service and improvement needs. Overall, the study will analyze the existing traffic circulation systems for downtown, and how current workers and visitors use those systems. All modes of circulation including vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle will be studied. The plan will consider proposed downtown developments, to identify and develop traffic and street improvement strategies through 2005. These alternatives could include roadway, traffic signal system and transit system improvements.

Some specifics of the study include:

- Data collection during typical business days and non-holiday time periods to assure that the analysis will capture the traffic impacts related to downtown business and University of Texas activities;
- Evaluation of pedestrian and bicycle movements to identify pedestrian and bicycle demand at critical locations;
- Analysis of Capital Metro bus services and bus stop locations to determine the relationship of bus operations on traffic operations.
- Development of a street classification . system for the study area based on the dominant transportation function of the street. The street classification system will serve as a basis for designing and dimensioning sidewalks and streetscape improvements to be planned and implemented by the City's "Great Street" program.

The final Downtown Access and Mobility Plan Report will identify recommended access and mobility improvements and a process to implement them. Cost estimates will be provided for improvements that could be implemented by 2005, and improvements that could go beyond 2005. The report is due for City Council consideration in spring 2001.

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Basic Data

Project Contact:
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